

VZCZCXRO4635
PP RUEHPA
DE RUEHUJA #1434/01 1870804
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 060804Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0148
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0418
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0419
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 7329
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001434

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/06/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KCOR](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: YAR'ADUA'S INITIAL ANTI-CORRUPTION RECORD

ABUJA 00001434 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Heather Merritt for reasons 1
.4. (b & d).

11. (C) SUMMARY. With just over one month in office, President Umaru Musa Yar'adua made history when he released his declaration of assets to the public, gaining praise for his transparency and setting a high marker for other public officials. However, other of his decisions raise the question of whether the new president is truly committed to cleaning up corruption within Nigeria or whether he is only willing to do so when it is politically expedient. His recent reshuffling of police commissioners may be a positive step, but it is also in keeping with the status quo and does nothing to bring corrupt commissioners to justice. While the arrest of former Police Inspector General Sunday Ehindero is positive on the whole, the EFCC has been conspicuously absent from the investigation. In addition, reports have surfaced that the EFCC may be stripped of its anti-corruption mandate to focus on money laundering and terrorism, which could seriously undermine the GON's ability to investigate and prosecute corruption cases. Although EFCC denies these reports, it is unclear what Yar'adua's position on the two organs is. While Yar'adua has made clear moves to present himself as a proponent of transparency and anti-corruption and the release of his declaration of assets should not be undervalued, on the whole the record of his initial month in office demonstrates little concrete action to change the status quo. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) DECLARATION OF ASSETS: With the public release of his declaration of assets on June 28, President Yar'adua became the first president in Nigerian history to publicly declare his assets. Interestingly, the Nigerian Code of Conduct Bureau actually counseled Yar'adua against the public declaration, stating that "such an action would put pressure on other categories of public officials to do the same even when the Constitution makes the exercise a confidential matter." Yar'adua was clearly building on the success of his public declaration of assets upon his inauguration as Katsina State Governor in 1999. What Yar'adua didn't do, however, was explain how his assets increased from less than 100 million Naira (775,194 USD) in 1999 to 856,452,892 Naira (6,639,169 USD) in 2007. In Yar'adua's 2007 declaration, he claims his income from assets is 18.7 million Naira (144,961

USD) and his wife's income from assets is 132,000 Naira (1,023 USD). (NOTE: A considerable portion of Yar'adua's land wealth comes from inheritances from his late brother Shehu Musa Yar'adua. These assets were included, however, in the 1999 declaration so they don't account for increase by more than eight times of his personal assets during his tenure as Governor.)

13. (C) COMMENT: The historic importance of Yar'adua's declaration should be neither ignored nor understated and politicians at national and state levels have already complained of public pressure to follow suit. That said, there has been surprisingly little speculation as to the source of the significant increase in Yar'adua's assets while governor. While the declaration itself is a positive step, the lack of discussion and questioning of the source of his recently accumulated wealth could actually serve to render the declaration meaningless. END COMMENT.

14. (C) On July 1, Yar'adua announced the redeployment (i.e., reshuffling) of state police commissioners. COMMENT. Reshuffling of this sort is usually thought to reduce corruption by placing individuals in states where they have few ties or personal connections. Given the patronage system that is prevalent in Nigeria, this is not necessarily a bad approach. It is in keeping, however, with the status quo and does nothing to try to bring top officials to justice for wrongdoing. Rather, it simply moves them to a new state in the hopes they will do less damage. END COMMENT.

15. (C) Former Inspector General of Police Sunday Ehindero was arrested on July 1 in the ongoing probe into the disappearance of 157 million Naira (1,217,054 USD) which was allegedly removed from Police Force Headquarters in Lagos on May 26, 2007. He was asked to refund 37 million Naira (286,822 USD) of this sum. In addition to the 37 million Naira, there is a continuing investigation into a 21 million

ABUJA 00001434 002.2 OF 002

Naira (162,791 USD) scam involving three of Ehindero's close aides. COMMENT. The arrest of a high-level official such as Ehindero is a positive step in fighting corruption, especially within a police service believed to be riddled with it. Of note, however, is the fact that the EFCC has not been involved in the investigation and has been completely quiet on the case. This is highly unusual in a case involving a person of this level and may be a result of the personal relationship between Ehindero and EFCC Chairman Ribadu. END COMMENT.

16. (C) Reports circulated on July 2 that the presidency clarified delineation of responsibilities between the EFCC and the ICPC, following complaints by some former governors of EFCC wrongdoing in investigating their cases. According to the reports, the EFCC transferred the investigation files of former state governors to the ICPC, which will take over the corruption investigations; the EFCC will concentrate its efforts on money laundering and terrorism. Secretary to the EFCC Emmanuel Akomaye told Poloff on July 5 that the reports were not accurate, that the investigation files on former governors remain with the EFCC and that the EFCC will retain its role in investigating corruption. He claimed the media reports to the contrary were "just politics." That said, there were also reports circulating that Yar'adua was looking to remove Ribadu as EFCC Chairman and that Ribadu traveled to Otta on July 2 to meet with former President Obasanjo in an attempt to save his job.

17. (C) COMMENT. The transfer of responsibility for investigation and prosecution of corruption cases to solely the ICPC would greatly impede the GON's ability to fight corruption. The ICPC has yet to prosecute a case and their position is viewed by most Nigerians involved in anti-corruption efforts as passive. Despite questions of political motivations, the EFCC has successfully investigated and prosecuted several cases and Chairman Ribadu enjoys a

fair level of credibility internationally. Though it appears that the reports of delineation of responsibility were not accurate, Akomaye was clear that politics are involved and it is not clear what the Villa's position is on the two organs.
END COMMENT.
CAMPBELL